Letter No 50. Wednesday - 11 June

Major T. H. Massey.
6 Palestinian Coy. The Buffs -
Middle East forces.

My darling sweet Barbara -

It is 10.45 pm. but I must start a letter then it is under way. I am still dying to have more news from you, to hear how you & the baby really are. She is three weeks old already. There must be many interesting things to tell. I do hope you are making a good & a quick recovery - how I long to be with you, my sweet - to hold you in my arms & to feel you getting strong again. If only I could take you home from the nursing home - make you tea, then put you to bed, & do things for you. And then bring your supper up, & sit & talk to you, kiss you very often. And then, quite early, come to bed, hold you to me close, & feel again very strongly, that you are safe & well me being denied all those superb & sincere feelings. What hell to be away from you - & I'm sure you will want me with you now darling, & I could be so loving & comforting & helpful to you. Oh dear - I defy anyone to miss anybody, more than I miss you. It's not just straightforward missing - it's all these particular things all the time, specific things. And many others which we do not know about - things which would have happened had we been together, but now never can.
I had a cable from Patricia today - "congratulations your son good luck love" - wretched girl, I cannot really think

she means what she says - she is just unlucky in what she says. And I had your p.c. of May 26th - just two days before the birth. How sweet you were to write to me then - but then you are sweet to me - very very sweet. I'm falling asleep, my darling. Goodnight, beloved sweetheart. X X X.

~~Saturday~~ Sunday 11th June. I can assure you darling - I have not been idle about writing to you, I just have not had any time at all, except on Thursday when I went to another Concert & was too tired to write when I came in. If you will cast your mind back to dates, when you get this, you will remember that it was on June 7th that we entered Syria. Up to then, for several days, & ever since, it has been a whirl, & I have been working solidly from 8 in the morning until 12 at night. I told you we had had a four hour raid on Monday night - we had the same again on Wednesday - & a two hour one last night. And there is no such thing as staying in bed for me, or going to sleep in a shelter. I have to take charge in what is called the Command Post, & take & send messages about things & be ready to command if any thing happens. The loss of sleep is a serious matter in addition, it makes one smoke so much more, being awake for so long - & then there is all the hard & concentrated normal work. But I am bearing up v. well, & feel rather pleased with my vitality. The one pleasure of the day, is a bathe in the sea every afternoon. In addition to all my other occupations, I am also Officer i/c Swimming for this part of the place, & have had to fix up a

safe bathing place. I obtained a marvellous large raft from the Navy - got the Marines to fix it up for me - & then there are ropes stretching in to the shore. It is really very good & the bathing is lovely - the sea being clear & warm - & only 200 yards from my room. So my normal daily programme has become up at 7-0 - office at 8-0 to 8-30 - work until 1-15, with a pint of tea at 10-30 - lunch at 1-15 - news from London at 2-0 - work at 2-15 - bathe at 3-30 - tea at 4-30 - work until 7-0 - bathe. first drink of the day & dinner - 8-30 work until finished - & then go to bed. hoping earnestly that there will be no air raid. Having had a big day's work, & got into bed at about 12-30, the sound of that siren, ½ an hour later, is almost more than I can bear.

And those are the reasons darling, why I have not progressed with this letter since Wednesday. But I posted an 11 page letter to you on Thursday, & an Autograph this morning - & this will go by Monday at the latest, so I am keeping to my schedule. I wonder have you made a numerical list of my letters; & the dates of my posting them & you receiving them. I have done that with yours, & then I am able to tell at a glance what letters there are still to come & to form some idea as to when they may arrive: it is also interesting to see the extraordinary way in which they do come in - for example, your 13th came on Jan 29, & your 12th on June 5th; that is the difference between

Sea & Air Mail.

Sweetheart - your 27th letter arrived today enclosing the photo from B. Shortland which you forgot to send with your previous letter. Dearest darling, it was wonderful to have this & to see how lovely & beautiful you are looking. I have been staring at it all today - every time I came into the office. I took it out of the envelope again, & propped it up against something, & put my face in my hands & just looked & looked at it, & thought how lovely & perfect you are, & became almost frantic with longing to be with you. Now, I have cut all the other people out of it, & pasted it onto paper & made a little folder & put it in my pocket book. You absolutely must have more photographs taken, please darling - every few weeks - & send them to me - & if any of them are especially good, you must send me the negatives too, so that I can have enlargements made. Darling, how I miss you & want you, my beloved sweetest darling - it is a stabbing, throbbing pain, all the time. I work like blazes & all the rest of it - but it all means nothing at all. I want you, you, my Barbara - nothing else & nobody else, & I just cannot think of anything else at all. To be in love with somebody like you, & to be loved by you - it was never intended that we should be taken away from each other in this horrible way. When I saw your photograph this morning, I was enveloped & engulfed in such passionate longing for you - I could almost feel & smell you, darling - & almost feel you touching me. How long is it going to be, Barbara? How am I going to last out. It is so interminable the way it goes on. Only the end of the war

can send me back to you. Sometimes I feel it may go on for years & years, an appalling thought — but more often I really do feel that the end will come this winter or early in the spring. No matter how long it is, my darling — I shall never, in any way, by thought, word or deed, be anything else but utterly & completely faithful to you. You believe that & want it, don't you darling? And I want it & believe it of you — & the time will pass somehow, & it must pass — & then we shall be gloriously together again. And we shall be utterly & completely happy — & we shall have nothing to tell or confess to each other & have any fear of anything ever being found out. It is the one thing which keeps me going & reasonably happy — the wonderfulness of the happiness & joy & contentment which is going to be ours when we meet again. In your latest letter, written only 12 days before the baby was born, you told me to have utter confidence in your faithfulness & love — Oh darling, I do, & most deeply & thankfully & gratefully. Never, never doubt, please. You know I don't. I take it as a wonderful, miraculous thing, which I appreciate always, which is a tremendous achievement on my part. And darling, you then said you would have in mine, until I told you otherwise myself. You have utter confidence, haven't you darling? I say & promise you again. That quite apart from how much & how passionately I love you — I love you completely & there is no room for anybody else & never will be. And apart from love too, I will

never allow anything to happen, however slight, about which I would be sorry afterwards, or which could spoil anything between us, or about which I could not tell you. I shall just return to you exactly as I left you. There is no difficulty or sacrifice about this, sweetest, in just all yours, heart, body, soul – so thankful to be so. I love you, darling Barbara.

I'm afraid I have not had any photographs taken. There is a difficulty in these parts, as cameras may not be used within a certain – large – area. There are many other restrictions too. But during the next few days, I definitely will, I promise you, borrow a camera! I get Ben-Ayi to come with me to some lovely spot, & take my club face in 8 different poses, & I will send the negatives too.

The concert on Thursday was a lovely one again. First, they played Beethoven's "Prometheus" Overture, which was short & pleasant. Then – Concerto No 2 for Pianoforte & Orchestra in B-flat major – Brahms – the soloist being a woman, Ilona Vincze-Kraus, which I enjoyed very much, especially the third movement: Andante. Then "Moldava", Symphonic Poem, by Smetana, a Czech – & finally Polovtsi Dances from Prince Igor, by Borodin. These were lovely, animated Slavonic dances. Georg Singer, conducting again, was in his best form, & especially for the dances, which he seems to enjoy very much himself, & gets the absolute best out of the Orchestra. Goodness knows why I did not listen to take an interest in music before – I enjoy it so very much now. But my musical education is so bad, really terrible. Ben-Ayi came with me again – in fact he persuaded me to go, as I said I was

too busy & couldn't. But he took no notice, & went away & bought the tickets. & presented me with a fait-accompli, & said it would do me good. It did. & I was very pleased.

You remember me talking about these Hopkins people - the Navy man & his wife & a 20 months old daughter? I arranged to go walking with them last Saturday - & when I arrived, found that he was too busy & could not come along. So I went along with Mrs & the child, Sheila. I had had the news about our baby by then, & felt very different. I carried Sheila downstairs, - & took her into the sea with me - & then we played for a long time after too. She was very shy at first, & then gained confidence in me & was sweet. It was lovely to be with a small child again & feel that she understood that I was somebody who could look after her & be trusted. She was, as always, so very different from Lisa - but she is a sweet child, & even though it made me feel terribly sad, I loved being with her - & I shall go again for tea sometime.

The Hopkins are very kind, & seem to like me - & have asked me to go there just whenever I want to. She, I discovered, was at the Royal College of Art, & is an Associate, whatever that may mean. I told her that you were at the Slade, & she didn't exactly twitter, but gave the idea that "anyone the Slade could meet". I should imagine she means well, but is pretty ordinary & non-Radcay, even though sentimental. She was at finishing at a large girls' school in Sunderland for 2 years. She says she was at College with Anthony. She is very pleasant really, & easy to talk to, & extremely kind, but not too interesting - really.

Summer is very much here now, it is pretty hot, but not frantically so, provided there is no Khamseen blowing. Working in my room is pretty stuffy though. Too the blackout, & so no ventilation at all — & so I just perspire, & the paper curls right up into a roll when I take my hands off it. All this, of course, is why I go sleepy when I try & write to you, late on & when I am tired. But I feel particularly fresh & full of energy tonight — & it is already 12-0 o'clock.

The Crete show was hell, while it lasted, wasn't it. They have now announced that the hostilities were in actual there — I hope to God Frank is alright. I should feel very sad indeed if anything has happened to him; I know you would like him so very much, & I am looking forward to having him as one of our friends, after the war. I think I will send him a short cable tomorrow.

I am still without further word from you, & I am so anxious to hear more news from you. Perhaps tomorrow. I do hope & pray that you are feeling really well now, my darling, & getting rapidly stronger. And that the feeding of the baby is going easily & well. I hope you feel wonderful, with your figure restored, & able to walk about easily again, & put on pretty clothes again. And I do hope you are being very careful looking after yourself & doing those elusive exercises. Oh, but I should be there with you. A thousand kisses, sweetest darling, all over your dear face, & your sweet mouth & lovely, lovely eyes & everywhere too. I think so much & my imagination is very much alive. Darling Barbara heart, I love you with all of me & for always, & always more & more. And a big kiss to the baby. Forever your Harry.

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
50
POSTAGE
REVENUE
2½
Mrs. H. Massey.
Carseland-
Pillory Hill.
Noss Mayo-
Plymouth.
Gt. Britain.
PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 2464
T.T. Massey.